



TOMMY G. THOMPSON

Governor
State of Wisconsin

May 17, 2000

Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senate
SH-506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3002

Dear Senator Lautenberg:

Thank you for your sponsorship of S. 1900, the High-Speed Rail Investment Act of 2000, to enable the states to improve and expand passenger rail service throughout the nation.

The new millennium already has proven to be an extremely exciting time for advocates of high-speed rail in this country. Significant efforts are underway across the nation to plan and implement upgrades to existing passenger rail corridors to provide improved and faster access to our nation's business centers. Long-term federal funding is a prerequisite to the successful implementation of intercity passenger rail corridor development programs.

In Wisconsin and across the nation, passenger rail programs offer great potential to provide effective, efficient, and environmentally sound transportation options in our regional intercity corridors. States are working closely with Amtrak to develop these market-based services that will support a wide range of transportation needs and help foster economic growth in large cities and smaller communities. S. 1900 will provide the necessary financial resources to continue development of these passenger rail corridors around the nation.

As congestion continues to increase exponentially, and highway or airport expansion becomes too costly, passenger rail provides a critical – and perhaps the only – means to provide continued access to our urban business centers, enhancing growth and promoting regional commerce. Long-term federal funding is a prerequisite to the successful implementation of high-speed rail corridor development programs. This innovative finance bill will provide a dedicated source of funding for high-speed rail that, in a zero-sum game, will not impact the highway or aviation trust funds or general appropriations.

Passenger rail needs to be part of our nation's multimodal transportation system, but we should not require these modes to compete among themselves for funding. S. 1900 will provide resources for passenger rail without jeopardizing existing federal funding for highways, aviation, transit, or other modes. Our transportation system needs all modes, including passenger rail, to handle existing and future travel demands.

I appreciate your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tommy G. Thompson".

TOMMY G. THOMPSON
Governor